JOHN GILPIN'S
STEAM COACH
Adventures.

CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION

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JOHN GILPIN'S

STEAM COACH EXCURSION,

TO ENTER

MASTER JOHNNY

AT

HARROW SCHOOL.

——"thrown off for the amusement of a Family of young persons."

——"to vary the graver occupations of the well-filled day."

Norwich:

Wm. Woodrow, Bookseller, Stationer, &c.

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John Gilpin's Steam Carriage Excursion to Harrow.

PART I.

"NOW let us sing, long live the King,
And Gilpin long live he;
And when he next doth ride abroad
May I be there to see."

So sang a sweet, a deathless bard,
To lull no idle pain;
Distant in genius as in fate,
I emulate the strain.

Full many a trip hath Gilpin since
Achiev'd, yet who doth know it?
For thou dear Cowper, wast not there;
The Hero lack'd a poet.

But I was there when, bent to prove,
What seem'd but fairy dream,
Wife, self, & children first launch'd forth
For Margate, bound by steam.

And I was there when mounted gay,
On steed of magic skill,
Velocipede y'clep'd he gain'd
The base of Hampstead hill.

To gain the steep was not his lot,
Till puzzling each beholder,
Revers'd their fate, the rider walk'd,
Steed mounted on his shoulder.

And oh! I heard him then and there,
Assert, in doleful ditty,
Riding was tenfold more a toil,
Than walking in the City.

But these were tame suburban feats,
To loftier themes I rise;
Sing how to Harrow on the Hill,
He rode steam carriage wise!

Steam carriage wise he rode and well,
The occasion graced the deed;
For wife and self to enter son
At Harrow had decreed.

"Our Jack is sure a youth of parts,
As many a friend hath told him:
Is it then just—what think you dear?—
A draper's shop should hold him?"

Thus many a month did Gilpin's spouse
Extol poor Johnny's learning,
Till Gilpin won or worn agreed,
To yield to her discerning.

"Now, Mr. G. you show your sense;
These cits are all so narrow—
No, Jack shall be a gentleman,
And go to school at Harrow."

"And Mr. G. she thus resum'd,
For pride as well you know,
I scorn it, yet in such a case,
'Twere well to make a show.

"They tell me steam is all the rage,
And 'twill not cost much more;
And I'll be bound no boy has thus
Been enter'd there before."

Oh, woman's logic! Gilpin pause!
Yet no—'tis now too late;
Here comes the carriage! what ensued
My second strain shall state.

PART II.

OH! there was packing there that day,
Of hampers and portmanteau, —
Of clothes and toys, to schedule which
Would cost the muse a canto.

Nor least with reverence be it sung,
To guard against disaster,
A cake to carve amongst the boys,
A hare to sooth the master.

The charcoal glows; the water steams:
The well oil'd piston rises;
Each cog, impatient of delay,
Its lumbering load despises.

Dash, dash, they go! the city quakes;
St. Andrew's, Holborn, trembles;
St. Giles's starts; and Oxford Street
In wondering crowds assembles.

Gilpin was at the helm; his spouse
To tend the fire had boasted:
"Hard if a pot *she* could not boil,
Who many a goose had roasted."

And boil it did; and on they rush'd;
Nought barr'd their conquering way;
While hackneys, cabs, cart, coach, and horse,
In one wide ruin lay.

"'Tis pleasant journeying, Mr. G.
One cannot call it vapid."
True—yet, methinks, "returned her spouse,
"We travel somewhat rapid."

"Well then, put down the damper there,
And load it well with hampers,"
She spoke; and wise her kitchen lore,
Had safety valves *been* dampers,

But valves for safety would not brook
Such dastardly detention:
The explosion dire that quick ensued
The muse needs scarcely mention.

Dear master Johnny, nurse and fry,
Young Gilpins four or five,
Pitch'd on a hay stack, well rejoic'd
To find themselves alive.

"Stop, stop, Papa: we cannot run
So fast as you do travel:
Pray stop—the roads are full of mud,
Our shoes are full of gravel."

"Ill stop the fly," cried Mrs. G.
And sooth she strove to do it;
But who to stop a fly doth strive,
Assuredly will rue it.

And this experienc'd Mrs. G.
When safe, though much affrighted,
Joining the party on the road
She tangent-wise alighted.

"Stop, stop, dear husband; stop papa;
Stop master," all in chorus
Exclaim our party on the road,
As Gilpin flies before us.

"Stop, stop," the wondering rustics cry;
"The gem'man travels rare;
Sure he mistakes our Harrow Hill
For Edmonton or Ware."

And stop he did—but time & place,
And cause of his enthralment,
The muse reserves with frugal skill,
To grace her next instalment.

PART III.

WHO travell'd hath the Harrow road
In waggon or in carriage,
Knows well the bridge which men in scorn,
Its virtues to disparage.

Surnamed "the Dangerous"—dangerous once
No longer so I ween;
For swept away it was with floods,
Though now built up again.

So tottering was its bankrupt frame
No mortal would endorse it;
Yet not to Gilpin dangerous 'twas—
For why? he did not cross it.

To tempt the ford beside its span
Prefer'd our prudent draper;
Or truth to speak 'twas not his choice,
But choose the instinctive vapour.

But vapour found a conquerer too
For Naiads cool'd his march,
Till in mid-stream the carriage stopp'd,
Beneath the dangerous arch.

No lack of time had Gilpin's spouse
And babes, that luckless day,
To overtake the reverend sire,
Who calm at anchor lay.

"Lend, lend a rope; there haul the trunks—
The hare—the cold *collection*;"
So madam nam'd the viands stor'd
To grace that day's refection.

The gathering villager's obey'd;
The cargo safe was landed;
Poor Gilpin, he alone, left last,
In mid-stream still lay stranded.

But ere the rope he caught, the steam,
Conscious of lighten'd load,
Resum'd her breath, the wheels revolv'd,
And off the carriage rode.

Again the chace to Harrow Hill—
Wife, children, crowd and all;
And many a cart, and horse and gig,
Again was doom'd to fall.

"Throw out the fire!" he straight obey'd,
In shoals the embers flew;

And smoking thatch and blazing ricks
Proclaim'd his aim right true.

The fire now check'd, the water spent,
At Harrow's steepy base
Our hero curb'd his bolting steed,
And found a resting place.

Now, wife and chicks, in car replac'd,
With many a welcome hearty,
Up Harrow Hill at sober pace,
A hay cart tows the party.

To tell the wit that flow'd that day
My feeble skill surpasses;
Or how the toll-man made a fee
For carriage work'd by asses.

This solely falls to me to sing,
That madam's cold collation,
While chaise and pair were horsing too,
Concluded the ovation.

Home they return'd; nor needed torch
Or harvest moon to guide them,
For glowing barns and farmers' ricks
Cast ample blaze beside them.

Young Johnny took to father's trade,
And work'd out his indentures;
Now grown a common councilman,
He seeks no new adventures.

FINIS.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT is due to a recent Number of the Christian Observer, for the foregoing verses, under the signature of "Cowperianus," the writer, (after other observations, some of which are introduced in our title page,) observes that 'he happened to need an hour's complete "play," to give the mind time to recover its tone, after some pursuits of a very serious and absorbing character. Had Cowper offered to your Gravityship his inimitable lines on Gilpin, I should have expected to see in your next answer to correspondents, the announcement "W. C's. stanzas are not consistent with our plan." I must not therefore frown, should you append a similar notification to my humble continuation of them; but I forewarn you, in that case, of the wrath of all my young friends; one of whom, by the way, reminds me that you once admitted a continuation of Cowper's Eyes and Nose, and therefore cannot, in justice, exclude a sequel to his Gilpin. Wishing you the best success in your more important matters, I plead for the little indulgence of a playful parenthesis.'

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